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RURAL AREAS
DEVELOPMENT

NEWSLETTER

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RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS APPROVED IN 39 STATES ... INCLUDE 169 MILLION ACRES

Forty-four Resource Conservation and Development projects have now become operational in 35 states -- projects encompassing over 134 million acres. Seven other approved RC&D projects require more planning to become operational.

These 51 projects are located in 39 states and include 169 million acres.

Another 41 applications for RC&D projects have been submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture by sponsors in 26 states.

The RC&D program provides Federal technical and financial assistance in developing and carrying out a plan of action for the orderly conservation, improvement, development and wise use of the natural resources of a designated area. USDA's Soil Conservation Service coordinates Federal help in the projects.

Dr. Thomas K. Cowden was confirmed by the U.S. Senate May 8 as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development and Conservation. A native of Hickory, Pennsylvania, and graduate of Ohio State University, Dr. Cowden was Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University when nominated for his present position by President Nixon. Agencies that report to Dr. Cowden are Farmer Cooperative Service, Farmers Home Administration, Forest Service, Rural Community Development Service, Rural Electrification Administration, and Soil Conservation Service.

RC&D projects are designed to complement other regional comprehensive planning efforts.

Project action plans are developed by local sponsors who initiate the request for USDA assistance under this program. The sponsors are local and state governmental units with responsibilities in conservation in land and water resource development aimed at improving an area's economy.

The program serves as a catalyst for other needed community developments. Resource development often triggers such events as the location of a new industry in the area.

The 1,100 individual project measures so far completed within RC&D projects have resulted in the creation of more than 14,000 new jobs and will increase the annual gross income in the project areas by an estimated \$158 million.

About 2,900 other project measures are being installed and planned in the areas approved to date.

SGT. YORK'S HOME COUNTRY UNDERGOING RAPID CHANGES

Hull-York-Lakeland Resource Conservation and Development project 80 miles east of Nashville, Tennessee, an 11-county, 2-1/2 million-acre part of the Cumberland Highlands, has undergone rapid changes since October, 1966, when work on improving the area began.

Since then, in this home country of World War I hero Sgt. Alvin T. York:

- * 68 projects have been completed, and are expected to add \$9.1 million gross income to the area annually.
- * Work is underway on 30 other measures, expected to add \$4.0 million more in annual gross income.
- * Farm conservation work has zoomed 40 percent over pre-project days.
- * Ten of the 11 RC&D counties have new industries. Three job training centers are operating and a new mountain crafts association is active.
- * Five towns now have sanitary landfills or the land for them.
- * Five new libraries have been built and four new health centers are under construction.
- * Flood prevention work has helped farmers and homeowners and helped one factory employing 1400 people to remain in operation.

AIDES TO HELP LOW-INCOME FARMERS

The Mississippi Extension Service cooperating with the Federal Extension service is sponsoring pilot projects in six counties to test the effectiveness of non-professional aides in helping low-income farmers.

The aides will give intensive assistance to low-income farmers who need a supplemental or a better primary crop. Special attention will be given vegetable production. Vegetables make intensive use of land, provide employment for the family, and provide a cash income.

Assistance needed by most of the families is much broader than just agricultural and will include other services, to raise living standards.

VIRGINIA COMPLETES HEARINGS
ON 22 PROPOSED PLANNING DISTRICTS

The State of Virginia has completed local hearings for a proposed 22 new multi-county planning districts covering the state.

T. Edward Temple, director of the State's Division of State Planning and Community Affairs, predicted that most proposed district boundaries would remain the same as drawn.

The proposed districts were authorized in 1968 by the Virginia General Assembly. The Division of State Planning and Community Affairs proposed the boundaries of the districts and held the public hearings.

Cities, towns, and counties in each suggested district are encouraged to organize a planning district commission, which in turn would plan how to solve the economic, social and physical problems within the district.

Temple reported that attendance at the hearings averaged 75 persons.

Final decisions on the boundaries are expected to go to local governments by July 1.

All jurisdictions within a district do not have to participate in the formation of a planning district commission.

The state is authorized to give financial assistance to a district commission of up to \$5,000 for each 25,000 persons, but no grant can be less than \$10,000.

However, state financial aid to a planning district commission will be based upon the total population of the jurisdictions which are members of that commission.

When a planning district commission approves a comprehensive plan for the district, it is binding only on those jurisdictions whose governing bodies adopt it.

Additional information is available by writing T. Edward Temple, Director of Division of State Planning and Community Affairs, The Commonwealth of Virginia, The James Madison Building, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

SELF-HELP HOME BUILDERS BUSY

At Batchelor, Louisiana recently the new administrator of the Farmers Home Administration, James V. Smith turned first to one group of self-help home builders who had just finished eight homes with FHA loans and presented them with a large symbolic key. Moments later he turned to the representative of a self-help housing association from neighboring Valverda, Louisiana and presented him with a gold-painted shovel, symbolic of the start of 10 new self-help homes in that community. Smith noted that self-help construction cuts the cost of these 3-bedroom homes -- and thus the size of the loans -- about \$1,500 to \$2,000 each.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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OFFICIAL BUSINESS



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SECOND-HOME PLANS AVAILABLE

For those considering the second-home and recreational building business in rural America, plans developed by Agricultural Research Service engineers are available for several types of such homes and recreational campsite buildings.

A limited number of initial planning sheets for these structures are available from the Editor, RAD Newsletter, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

These initial plans provide floor plans and other information with which a prospective builder could determine preliminary cost estimates. If he then wishes large-scale working drawings, they may be obtained through county Extension agents or from the Extension agricultural engineer at most State agricultural colleges. There usually is a small charge for working drawings.

When ordering the initial planning sheets please specify them by name and number:

- "A-Frame Cabins," MP 981
- "Cabin - Concrete Masonry Construction," MP 1050
- "A-Frame Cabin," MP 1093
- "Cabin ... with Dormitory Loft," MP 1074
- "Cabin ... Frame, Slab-on-grade construction," MP 924
- "Pole - Frame Cabin," MP 1076
- "Pole - Frame Cabin," MP 1079
- "Adirondack-Type Shelter," MP 1055
- "Sheltered Barbeque Pits," MP 1099
- "Picnic Shelter," MP 1047